



**The Herb Society of America, Inc.  
Becoming a Unit of HSA  
Approved June 2009**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

***What is The Herb Society of America?***

The Herb Society of America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational, horticultural organization. For over 75 years the organization has adhered to its original goals: furthering the knowledge and use of herbs, contributing the results of the experience and research of its members to the records of horticulture, science, literature, history, the arts, and economics. The Society has approximately 2,500 members in the United States and overseas. Society members consist of gardeners, cooks, authors, academics, horticulturists, business owners, and individuals who just love herbs. Unit members will find many individuals throughout The Society with whom to share their interests.

***Must someone be associated with a unit to be a member of HSA?***

Membership in a unit is not a requirement for membership in HSA - we have many active members at large. However, membership in a unit can be a rewarding experience as unit members work together on educational programs and special projects within their community.

***Do unit members receive different benefits from members at large?***

All HSA members receive the same benefits, whether they are unit members or members at large.

***What are the benefits of becoming a unit?***

Being a unit of HSA offers both tangible and intangible benefits. They include:

- The option to obtain liability coverage under the national organization's insurance policy
- Access to resources to help you manage and grow the unit
- Involvement in a well-known and well-respected national organization
- Participation in HSA's marketing and outreach efforts, both through our Web site and national media coverage
- Access to the HSA community of units with whom to share program ideas and discuss issues such as membership, fundraising, writing newsletters or maintaining a public garden

***What is the relationship between units and the national organization?***

Units may have separate dues, policies, activities and membership requirements. Units are, however, required to adhere to the HSA mission statement and general policies of HSA.

Units participate in decisions regarding the national organization through their district membership delegate. The Herb Society of America is organized into seven geographic districts. All members – unit members and members at large – are represented on the board of directors through the membership delegate, who is elected from within the district by district members.

***What are the requirements of being a unit of HSA?***

- Each unit must support HSA's mission, which reads: *The Herb Society of America is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, use and delight of herbs through educational programs, research and sharing the experience of its members with the community*



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- Unit by-laws must be consistent with HSA's by-laws
- The unit membership policy must contain a nondiscriminatory clause, i.e. prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, veteran, marital status, sexual preference or any other reason prohibited by law
- Each member of the unit must also be a member of the national organization
- Each unit must follow the annual reporting requirements and submit national dues and a membership roster on a timely basis

***Does a unit have to support a public garden or hold symposia?***

No. Units may undertake any projects or programs that they find of interest, although HSA does encourage units to offer public educational programs (and provides educational resources for doing so).

***Does a unit have to be a 501(c)(3) organization?***

No. Incorporating your unit as a tax-exempt organization is a unit decision. The national office can provide additional information on the benefits and requirements for obtaining tax-exempt status. Many states do require that you register as a non-profit entity. Please check with your state Attorney General for additional information and requirements.

***What is HSA's policy on medicinal herbs?***

While members of The Society may be interested in the medicinal uses and properties of herbs, it is the policy of The Society not to advise, recommend or prescribe herbs for medicinal use. Therefore, members agree that they, their employees or representatives cannot state or imply that The Herb Society of America provides medical advice or advocates the use of herbs for any known medical disorder.